MODERN VIOLIN CULTURE IN AMERICA

BY

GUSTAV SAENGER

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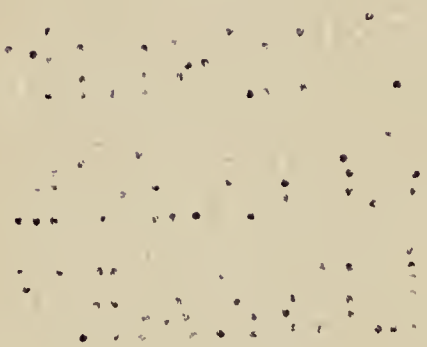

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MODERN VIOLIN CULTURE IN AMERICA

A review of recent additions to violin music, embodying the most advanced tendencies and typical of the highest artistic endeavors of our time

By

GUSTAV SAENGER

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IN contemplating the vast yearly output of violin publications, even the casual observer cannot help but notice how immeasurably superior the offerings have become during the last few years, as compared with those of a former generation. Modern taste, higher development and discriminating demands both as to quality of contents, editorial supervision, and attractive appearance have been responsible for a degree of excellence in present-day violin publications, which has never before been equalled. In speaking of violin publications such as these I will refer in particular to two distinctive classes, each of which represents a distinct phase of violin art and each of which has been raised to a higher and more inspired sphere of usefulness through modern masters, than has probably ever been the case in the past.

The two classes of violin publications referred to include (*1*) arrangements of music not originally written for the violin and (*2*) original compositions.

The history of violin-playing teaches us that its literature for a long time was entirely dependent upon those who became famous as players of the instrument. Founders of the old Italian school, such as Corelli, Tartini, Vivaldi, Veracini, and Viotti were all acclaimed as masterly players and each one left a wealth of violin works, all of which testify to the remarkable development they brought about in violin playing and to the unquestionable musicianly abilities of their writers.

With the advance of musical art, the advent of our classic composers, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, the cultivation of the string quartet, and the achievements of violin soloists up to Paganini's time, a marked change took place in music for the violin. Then came the romantic era of writers, which produced such works as the Mendelssohn, Brahms and Bruch violin concertos and no end of music influenced by the immeasurable possibilities of Richard Wagner's creations, as well as those of his inspired school of followers. All this left its mark upon violin writing, until now-a-days, the utmost technical problems impossible for a violinist of a former period, seem to have been reached in the orchestra with an obligato such as Richard Strauss wrote for his *Heldenleben* and in such violin solo works as the specializing genius of a Kreisler, a Godowsky, or a Leopold Auer can invent.

The knowledge of what has been written in the past for the violin is generally well-known and practically common property. But what our living players and composers are doing for the violin's literature at the present day of writing, is not so well-known and I shall therefore endeavor to point out some of the memorable things our great players of today are accomplishing and mention some of the works recently published, which in my opinion mark the furthest limits which modern artistry and musical development in violin composition and arrangement can boast of.

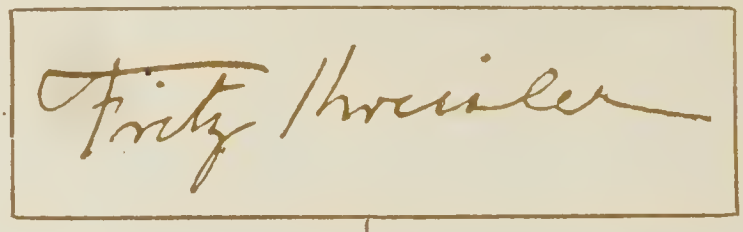
MATURE MASTERS

IN discussing the latest developments of modern violin writing, the order of precedence quite naturally falls to Fritz Kreisler, acknowledged not only as one of the greatest players of our age, but as a veritable genius in arranging and composing for his instrument. In examining into the factors which have combined in so remarkable a manner in this artist and helped him to such success, it must be understood that he is not to be classed with violinists of the past or present, who owe their fame merely to the possession of exceptional gifts as players. Kreisler is as expert in every branch of musical art as he is on the violin. He plays the piano as well as he does the violin and is as intimately acquainted with the orchestral, operatic, vocal, choral works of the classic masters as he is with the most advanced compositions of all modern writers. In addition he is a past-master of the art of scoring and it may confidently be expected that his exceptional creative talents will lead him, ere long, towards production of important works in larger form.

FRITZ KREISLER

To begin with, the sensational success of Kreisler's violin works are largely due to his abilities to play them all in his own inimitable style. But judging him merely as a writer, it must be acknowledged that nothing in the history of violin music can compare with the loving devotion and artistic taste he expended upon his *Classical Manuscripts* and *Classical Masterpieces* (in modernized arrangements), a monument to the chaste, inventive powers of the old masters, as well as to his own skill in rejuvenating these rare classics and making them practically indispensable for every modern soloist's repertoire. Nor must we lose sight of his fine *Free Transcriptions of Compositions by Anton Dvořák* (Indian Lament, Slavonic Fantasie, and three Slavonic Dances) as well as his concert transcriptions of Chopin's *A minor Mazurka Ballet Music* from Schubert's *Rosamunde*, and a *Spanish Dance* by E. Granados, all done with expert judgment as to technical possibilities, effect and that rare refinement, which characterises all of his work.

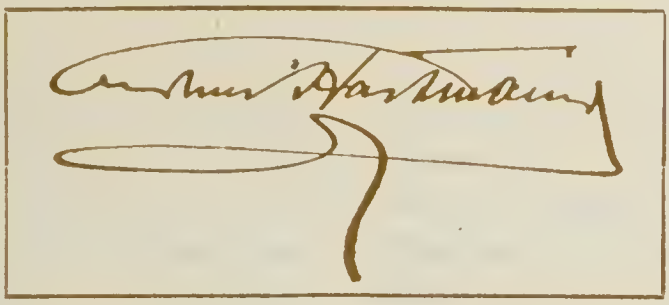
Some of Kreisler's best work as an arranger for the violin has furthermore been accomplished in his transcriptions of Austrian Folk-Songs represented at best by his *Liebesfreud*, *Liebesleid*



and *Schoen Rosmarin*, which have long since become established classics with the entire violin-playing world, while such numbers as the *Viennese Melody* (Gaertner-Kreisler) the *Viennese Popular Song* and his splendid arrangement of the *Austrian Imperial Hymn* "Gott erhalte unseren Kaiser" have added considerably to his reputation in this field of writing.

But it has been through his original compositions that Kreisler has enriched the violin literature to the greatest extent. Aside from their enormous effectiveness as violin solos, pure and simple, these works must be considered as important musical creations, in so far that they have established an entirely new era in modern violin music. A clear understanding of Kreisler's abilities as a virtuoso and a just appreciation of his musicianship are therefore necessary to estimate his original compositions at their true value. Such numbers as his *Caprice Viennois* and *Tambourin Chinois* could never have been written but by a musician of extraordinary originality and skilled in the very limits of his art. And no matter in how modern or intricate a form Kreisler presents his ideas they *are always absolutely suitable for the violin.* He has solved the mystery of how to treat his instrument just as the old Italian masters did centuries ago, always singing just as they did, only in modern, more fully developed accents. In conclusion, mention should also be made of his *Berceuse Romantique* (Romantic Slumbersong) and the *Rondino* on a theme by Beethoven, which have been conceived in his happiest vein, and which, particularly the Rondino, have become as popular as any of his earlier works.

MATURE MASTERS—Continued.



Another modern player who has gained an international reputation both as soloist and writer for his instrument is Arthur Hartmann. The traits and personal characteristics of this artist, his impetuosity and enthusiasm are all reflected in his music, which, without exception is of greatest merit and entirely in keeping with the highest standards of recent violin writing. Hartmann is a modern musician to the core, who delights in the most advanced theories and takes a lively interest in the world's musical progress. Above all, he is a personality of strictly artistic beliefs and opinions and his sincerity in this respect is proven by his utter abhorrence of everything that smacks of sensational or in-artistic methods.

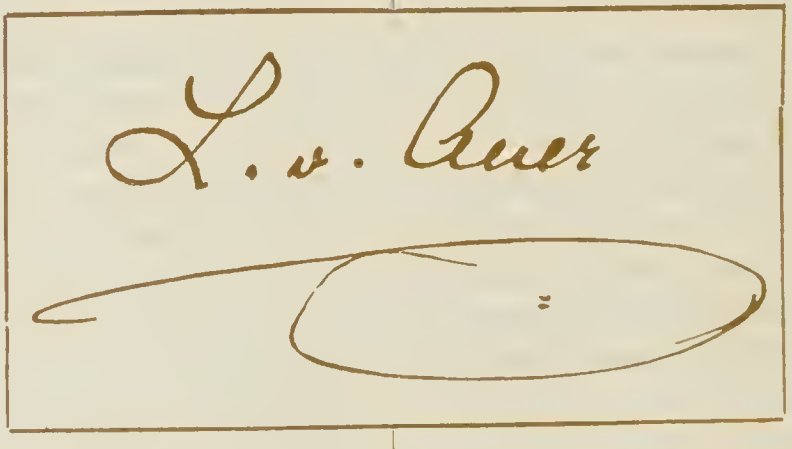
As a player, he takes rank with the foremost virtuosi of our time and his writings are the triple result of his own executive abilities, his rare musicianship and creative gifts.

Some of his very best contributions to the violin's literature are a very unusual *Souvenir* and a *Suite in Ancient Style* (Op. 27) in four numbers, (1) Aria (2) Gavotte, (3) Sarabande Varie and (4) Finale. This Suite, in particular, leaves little doubt as to Hartmann's thorough musicianship and his skill in using the models of our classic masters, to suit his own creative ends. It is a valuable addition to the best modern works of this class. Two shorter violin solos such as his Romance *Autumn* (In Hungary) and *Seven O'clock* are particularly representative of his characteristic vein of writing, and his particular skill as an arranger for his instrument has been abundantly manifested in two recent transcriptions, one, a ravishing *Valse Caline*, by Renati Brogi, and the other, an indescribably effective composition by Edm. Filipucci, entitled *La Chanson des Abeilles* (Song of the Bees).

* * *

One of the most interesting of American resident violinists is Franz Kneisel equally well-known as a soloist, quartet-player and teacher. It is his just due to be included among those indefatigable artists who have helped so greatly in the musical development of the United States and his endeavors in this direction have given him a reputation second to none in this

country. While he has never distinguished himself as a writer for his instrument, I must not fail to mention his excellent contribution to the violin's literature in shape of a modernized version of a famous classic concerto by Antonio Vivaldi for four violins with accompaniment of string instruments and piano. Vivaldi was one of the greatest writers of the old Italian school and his numerous works were of remarkable influence upon the musical world in general, so great indeed that Johann Sebastian Bach rearranged many of his works for different instrumental combinations. Mr. Kneisel has re-arranged this concerto in turn, to meet the requirements of our own time, and has been assisted considerably by the valuable cooperation of Dr. Frank Damrosch, who prepared a special piano accompaniment part from the original Cembalo part. The Concerto as it now stands, is a most valuable addition to the violin's literature and may justly be claimed as one of the most important ensemble publications of its kind issued within recent years.



Speaking of the re-arrangement and newly revised edition of the above work calls to mind similar achievements by two very prominent artists, both of whom have contributed a remarkable share towards the advancement of the violin and its music.

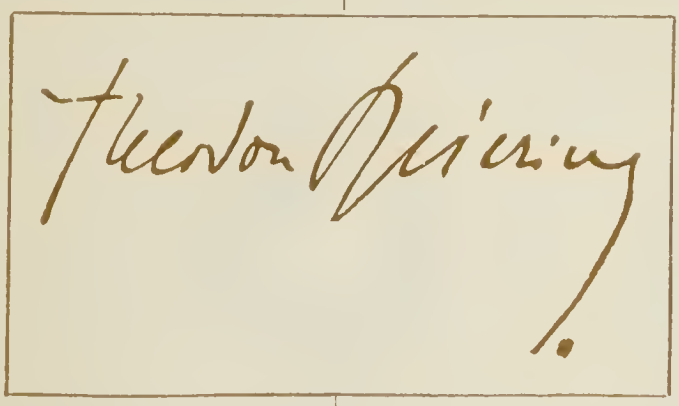
One is Leopold Auer, famous as one of the foremost soloists of a former generation, as the teacher of some of the greatest players now living and equally famous as a composer, arranger and editor of violin works.

The second is Theodore Spiering, an American solo violinist, teacher and conductor of international reputation.

Leopold Auer has only recently published a number of original solo compositions, such as *Two Concert Transcriptions on Extracts from Beethoven's The Ruins of Athens* including a *Turkish March*, *Scherzo* and a *Chorus of the Dervishes*, *Etude*. These solos are designed for players of expert accomplishment and are written with the consummate skill of a master

LEOPOLD AUER

who has solved every problem of his art and whose experience and artistic judgment guides him towards the ideal accomplishment of whatever task he may undertake. In addition to these original creative efforts, Leopold Auer has recently been active to a very considerable extent with the editorial supervision of a large number of classic and modern works all of which have now appeared in print and constitute important additions to the violin's literature. Heading this list are the Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms *Concertos*, with new and original *Cadenzas* by Auer for the Beethoven and Brahms, Louis Spohr's famous *Seventh* (Op. 38) and *Ninth* (Op. 55) *Concertos*, Bach's *Six Sonatas for Violin Solo*, Beethoven's *Two Romances* (Op. 40 and 50), his complete *Violin and Piano Sonatas* and Brahms' *Three Sonatas*, Op. 78 (in G major), Op. 100 (in A major) and Op. 108 (in D minor.) The advantage and practical importance of editions supervised by such a renowned master, can hardly fail to create the attention they deserve and will do much towards creating a better and more artistic understanding for these master-works.



In a like measure, Theodore Spiering has been offering the results of his long and successful career as a teacher and soloist, through similar editorial supervision of a large number of important classic and modern works. Up to date, these include Bach's two Concertos for violin and piano as well as this master's Concerto in D minor for two violins and piano. In addition,

Mr. Spiering has given us modern master revisions of such representative violin works as Saint-Saëns' *Concerto in A major* (Op. 20), Bruch's *Romanze* (Op. 42) and the *Fantasie on Scottish Folk-melodies*, Nardini's *Sonata in D major*, Mozart's *Sixth Concerto in E flat Major*, Vieuxtemps' *First Concerto in E major* (Op. 10) Tschaikowsky's elaborate *Valse Scherzo*, and Grieg's three Violin and Piano Sonatas, Op. 8, 13 and 45.

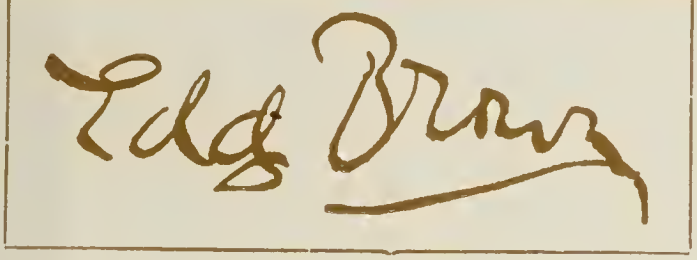
THEODORE SPIERING

In point of artistic reading, interpretative clarity, and authoritative disposition of phrasing, bowing and fingering, these editions are representative of the most advanced methods of our time.

* * *

As further proof of the thoroughness with which the above editions have been prepared, I must not forget to mention that the piano parts of the Beethoven and Brahms Sonatas (mentioned among Auer's revisions) as well as the three above-mentioned Grieg Sonatas have been prepared under the editorial supervision of Rudolf Ganz, one of the foremost concert-pianists now in America.

YOUNGER SCHOOL OF PLAYERS



EDDY BROWN

At the present time of writing, we can boast of a larger number of prominent solo-violinists of the younger school than have probably ever been assembled in the United States. Many of these are Americans by birth, most all have established international reputations at the very outset of their careers, and a large number has already enriched the literature of their instrument with many artistic arrangements and original compositions, thoroughly in keeping with modern musical thought and development.

Prominent among these younger players is Eddy Brown, a violinist of extraordinary technical equipment, who has shown his skill as a writer through several excellent Concert Transcriptions of Paganini's *Fourteenth* and *Twenty-second Caprices* and a highly ingenious concert arrangement of Louis Victor Saar's *Gavotte-Intermezzo.*

* * *

Then there is Albert Spalding, acknowledged as a player of unusual power and individuality, who has just come to the front with a splendid *Suite* in four parts, (Prelude, Aria, Vivace and Fantasia) in which he demonstrates unusual creative ability and a refined sense of writing for his instrument.

ALBERT SPALDING

FRANCIS MACMILLEN

Another player who has been before the American public almost continually for a long number of years is Francis Macmillen. His reputation has been firmly established as interpreter of the classic and modern masters, while recent concert arrangements and original violin works of his own are giving surprising evidences of his abilities as a writer. Last season much of the success of his concert programs was due to such of his own numbers as the *Causerie* (Prairie Flower), the *Serenade Negre*, a most exceptional bit of concert writing, a *Barcarole*, justly acknowledged as one of the most attractive modern pieces heard within recent years, and a number of concert arrangements (*Hunting Song*, *Spinning Song*, *Venetian Gondola Song* by Mendelssohn and Chopin's Waltz Song, *Maiden's Wish*) all of which testify to his refined artistic sense and judgment in arranging such works for the concert platform.

This year he has added to these numbers with two original compositions, a *Liebeshymne* (Hymn to Love) and a captivating *Nijinski* Mazurka, both of which bear further evidences of his talents as a composer of brilliant violin music. A third novelty in shape of a so-called *Gavotte des Ecoliers* by an old French writer, Chantrelle, was originally found by Macmillen among a lot of old manuscripts in Paris and has now been transformed by him into a modern solo number of indescribable charm and effectiveness.

* * *

EFREM ZIMBALIST

Another highly gifted player, the Russian, Efrem Zimbalist, who will be heard extensively throughout the United States during the forthcoming season, has also done some creditable work as a contributor towards the literature of his instrument through his *Suite in Alter Form* including a Prelude, Sicilienne, Menuet, Largo and Finale. In this work Zimbalist has given us a most unusual demonstration of how the rigid, majestic forms and musical idioms of the classic writers can be utilized in connection with modern ideas to wonderful effect. It is a work along lines of classic grandeur and should be highly

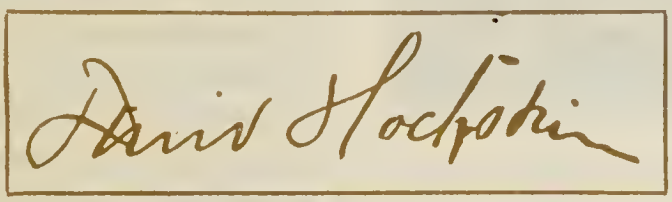
MAXIMILIAN PILZER

prized by accomplished soloists. In addition, Mr. Zimbalist has also been active as an editor of "Five Transcriptions from the 18th Century" by S. Lieberson. These transcriptions include an *Andante Cantabile* by Ph. Em. Bach, *Les Papillons* by Fr. Couperin, an *Adagio* by G. B. Graziolo, and two pieces by J. Ph. Rameau, *Les Tendres Plaintes* and *Musette*, all delightfully effective concert numbers, and provided with exhaustive marks for fingering and bowing by Mr. Zimbalist.

* * *

Four clever and very ambitious young American solo violinists, Maximilian Pilzer, David Hochstein, Louis Persinger, and Max Donner must not be omitted from this list of contributors to the violin's literature.

Mr. Pilzer, whose success as concert-master of the New York Philharmonic Society, has brought him international fame within two short seasons,has also exhibited exceptional gifts as a writer. Last season he came forth with a *Love Song* and a *Caprice Valse* which gained immediate popularity and this year he has added to these with a *Novellette*, a haunting *Orientale*, a *Berceuse* and a *Meditation* together with brilliant concert transcriptions of an old Hebrew melody *Kol Nidre* and Chopin's *Etude*, Op. 25, No. 2. All these numbers are modern in spirit and prove the exceptional musicianship of their writer, without a doubt.



The contributions of David Hochstein include an original *Menuet* and *Ballade*, two spirited compositions of singular melodic beauty and two exquisite concert arrangements of Brahms' *Waltzes in A minor* and *A major*, while Louis Persinger is represented by two effective concert transcriptions of Dvořák's famous Song *Als die alte Mutter* (Songs my Mother taught me, Op. 55, No. 4) and Reichardt's enormously popular melody *In the Time of Roses*.

DAVID HOCHSTEIN

Max Donner, a young American violinist of excellent qualifications has contributed much within recent years to call attention to his talents as a writer. His *Sonata* (Op. 4) is a fine piece of writing and a large number of brilliant concert compositions such as his *Lullaby* (Op. 25), *Träumerei* (Op. 30), *Poéme* (Op. 41), *Humoreske* (Op. 42), *Reverie* (Op. 43), *Canto Religioso* (Op. 50), *Chanson des Sauterelles* (Op. 51), *Pièce Characteristique* (Op. 52), *Danse Fantastique* (Op. 53), *Chanson au Rouet* (Op. 56), *La Chasse* (Op. 57), and *Gavotte scintillante* (Op. 58) all give evidences of his unquestionable inventive and melodic talents. Two concert arrangements of Old 17th Century Dutch Songs must also be included among his best works.

* * *

RICHARD CZERWONKY

Another well-known solo-violinist and concert-master, Richard Czerwonky, has added considerably to the creditable list of modern concert works for the violin, both with original creations and concert transcriptions of famous classic masterpieces.

Among Mr. Czerwonky's more ambitious concert works may be mentioned an elaborate brilliant *Souvenir de l'Amerique*, a striking fantaisie on American melodies which has been played by him with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra throughout the United States; then there are two charming *Albumleaves* and his captivating *Serenade*. This season he has added to these with a number of melodious solo works (*Cradle Song*, *Evening Mood*, *Gavotte*, *Gondoliera*, *Menuet in Ancient Style*, *Romance*, *Waltz*) and three concert transcriptions of classic master works such as an *Aria* by Antonio Caldara, an *Arietta* by the famous G. B. Pergolese di Jesi, and an *Arietta di Paisiello* by Taranto.

Mr. Czerwonky's writings throughout prove him a skilful musician and extraordinarily gifted violinist. His violin compositions are of decided merit and constitute a valuable addition to the modern output of this class of music.

YOUNGER SCHOOL—Continued.

Before concluding with the younger school of Players, I must not forget to mention Edwin Grasse, one of the most remarkable musical talents of our time. Cruelly robbed by nature of his eyesight since birth, he has been otherwise endowed with extraordinary musical gifts. He is a solo-violinist of distinction, an astonishing pianist and a composer who has given forth no end of works in small and large form, all of which testify to his surprising grasp of every branch of the art. His compositions for violin include a large number of unpublished larger works (sonatas, a string quartet, etc.) and some of his later published solos (in shorter form) are a *Song without Words*, a characteristic number, *In a Row Boat*, and a hugely interesting *Polonaise* in C major.

Grasse's musical traits are entirely modern. He writes with the freedom and fluency of a master and has solved the problems of technical possibilities on the violin as few other writers of our time have done. In addition his works all reflect the characteristics of a remarkably enthusiastic, fiery nature, imbued alike with expressive, refined and original ability of the highest order.

REPRESENTATIVE TEACHERS and SOLOISTS

Cecil Burleigh, an American violinist and teacher at a Sioux City Institution, has probably enriched the violin's literature as far as characteristic American music is concerned, to a greater extent than any of our presentday writers for that instrument. Still a young man, he has produced works of striking originality, dramatic effectiveness and in an incredibly short space of time, has developed into a veritable master of short, concise forms of descriptive compositions which he succeeds in imbuing with the most remarkable and undeniable touches of distinctive originality.

CECIL BURLEIGH

Mr. Burleigh's latest contributions in this vein include a set of six *Nature Studies* Op. 23 (*Fragrance*, *Clouds*, *Maying*, *Fairyland*, *Hour of Nine* and *Heave Ho*), a second set of *Six Pictures* Op. 30 (*Distance*, *Rocks*, *Ripples*, *Hills*, *A Mirage* and *Murmurings*) and a highly ingenious set of so-called *Plantation Sketches* Op. 36 the individual titles of which give an immediate idea of the underlying motive which inspired their writer. Here they are:—*In Cotton Fields*, *Pickaninnies*, *A Log Cabin*, *Uncle Rastus*, *Mammy's Lullaby* and *Minstrel*.

* * *

Sam Franko, another musical personality of international reputation, and closely connected with the violinistic developments of our time, has labored long and successfully as a conductor, soloist, editor, arranger and teacher, his work in either of these fields invariably attaining the highest standards of the art. Some of his most recent contributions as an editor and arranger, include a modernized version of Pierre Rode's little-known *Sixth Violin Concerto*, prepared for the concert stage in collaboration with Mr. Louis Victor Saar and played by Eddy Brown at his first recital of the new season at Carnegie Hall, and a charming concert arrangement of a little-known *Song without words* by *Mendelssohn*.

* * *

Among New York's Colony of prominent teachers and soloists quite a number are distinguishing themselves as writers for their instrument. Among the most successful of these are such

widely-known artists as Edmund Severn, Victor Küzdö, Christiaan Kriens, Fritz Stahlberg and Alberto Bachmann, all producing creditable works of lasting and pronouncedly artistic merit.

EDMUND SEVERN

Edmund Severn, a distinctive and highly gifted American writer has produced ambitious Symphonic works, which have been repeatedly heard in public. Among his most important works for the violin is a *Concerto in D minor* which was played with great success by Maximilian Pilzer at a concert of the New York Philharmonic Society in New York City last season, and which was declared by a majority of local critics to be one of the most effective and thoroughly capable compositions of its kind heard within recent years. The work as a whole is very brilliant and violinistic throughout and may justly be classed among the very best of the all-too-few modern concertos. Other important violin works which Mr. Severn has contributed to the violin's modern literature include a highly original *Suite from Old New England* in four parts (I. Pastoral Romance, II. Rustic Scherzo, III. Lament, and IV. Kitchen Dance) his well-known *Italian Suite* (La Danzatrice, Memoria di Venezia, Storia D'Amore, La Bella Contadina and Rondo Napolitano) and a fine *Suite* for two violins and piano consisting of (*1*) Prelude (á là Barcarolle) (*2*) Danse Serieuse (*3*) Nocturne and (*4*) Fête Champetre. These three Suites are written in distinctive modern vein and designed for advanced players in search of difficult, brilliant concert material.

Two additional *Suites* written by Mr. Severn for young players also deserve mention in connection with his more advanced works, owing to the originality and musical ingenuity with which they have been conceived. They are entitled *In Central Park* (six pleasing and instructive pieces) and *In Picture Land*, a Suite of six descriptive solos for young violin players.

In addition, Mr. Severn has produced a large number of brilliant, shorter concert pieces (*Bacchanal, La Brunette,* Valse de Concert, *La Fileuse, Puck* and *Titania,* etc., etc.) all of which have added to his enviable reputation as one of the best of living American composers of violin music.

* * *

Victor Küzdö, a widely-known violinist, excellent teacher and gifted writer, has just written several new violin

Victor Kuzdo

solos, *Country Dance* (Op. 16) *Angelus* (Op. 17) *Promenade Grotesque* (Op. 18) and a *Serenade and Witches Dance* (the latter for Violin without accompaniment) which will add considerably to his reputation and increase our modern concert repertoire with four genuinely charming compositions. They form a creditable addition to his last year's successful solo *Le Talisman* (Op. 15).

* * *

Another highly gifted writer for the violin is Christiaan Kriens, a resident New York teacher and soloist. Both in schooling, temperament and natural inclinations, Mr. Kriens is a modern artist, who aims at the very highest ideals, and invariably infuses his works, whether large or small, with a considerable amount of unmistakable individuality. Mr. Kriens' most ambitious printed violin solo works include a very difficult *Romance*, a *Mazurka Hollandaise*, a *Souvenir de San Sebastian*, a *l'espagnole*, a *Reverie dans Les Montagnes* (Op. 77) and such thoroughly delightful solos as the *Serenade Basque*, *La Mouche* (The Fly), a Melody in olden style entitled *Chanson Marie Antoinette*, a *Second Mazurka de Concert*, a fine Paraphrase on *Annie Laurie*, a captivating Shepherd Song entitled *Vilanelle* and a brilliant, yet wholly dignified and suitable *Cadenza* to the first movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

CHRISTIAAN KRIENS

In addition, his very characteristic Suite *En Holland* (In Holland) in four parts deserves particular mention, the third part *Sons du Soir* (Evening Sounds) having achieved considerable success.

* * *

Fritz Stahlberg, assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society and himself an accomplished violinist, has recently issued three original compositions, a *Bagatelle*, a *Canzone* and a *Petite Gavotte*, which may justly be classed among the very best shorter compositions written within recollec-

tion. They are melodious, absolutely fascinating in point of effective setting and withal genuinely modern in style and harmonic treatment.

* * *

Modern salon works of genuine artistic merits have recently been contributed by Alberto Bachmann, a highly gifted soloist of the French School, now a resident of New York City.

Both in style, elegance and artistic finesse, Mr. Bachmann's work reminds of the very best efforts of Vieuxtemps, or de Beriot, while in point of musicianship he is immeasurably superior to either of these.

I have in mind a dignified *Arioso*, a fiery *Slavonic Dance*, Three Morceau including a *Berceuse*, a *Tempo di Minuetto*, a *Cracowiak*, and two very artistic *Meditations*, one on J. S. Bach's *First*, and the other on the same master's *Fifth Prelude*, all of which have been written in Bachmann's happiest vein.

* * *

In concluding this group of representative artists, I must not fail to dwell upon the exceptional abilities of a young American violinist and teacher, Franz C. Bornschein, who has achieved considerable success with important compositions of larger form and who has become prominently known as the writer of violin solo music of the most advanced type.

FRANZ C. BORNSCHEIN

Some of this writer's most ambitious contributions include a set of *Three Poetic Fancies* (*1*) *River Legend*, (*2*) *Rose of Yesterday*, *Aria on the G String*, and (*3*) *Amourette*, *a Valse Caprice*, and a number of individual solos (*Reflections*, *Serenade Caprice*, *The Dream Hour*, *Caprice Eccentrique* and *Love's Torment*) all of which give evidence of his artistic aims, highly developed musicianly temperament and expert sense of using every possible modern technical resource for the creation of his special effects. Some of these numbers are veritable masterpieces in this respect and deserve to be put in a class all by themselves.

MASTER PIANISTS and COMPOSERS who are Writing for the VIOLIN

Leopold Godowsky

A name to conjure with in the musical world at large is Leopold Godowsky, one of the greatest of living master pianists, and world renowned as a composer and arranger for his instrument.

Quite recently, he has also devoted himself to violin compositions, the result being a set of *Twelve Impressions* for violin and piano, the violin parts having been issued under the editorial supervision of no less an authority than Fritz Kreisler.

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

The artistic significance of these pieces, their striking originality and ravishing melodic character, as well as the uncommon and oft-times perplexing technical problems they present, places them before the violin-playing world as the most important contributions to the instrument's literature printed within recent years.

The pieces are individually entitled: (*1*) *Larghetto Lamentosa*, (*2*) *Profile* (*Chopin*), (*3*) *Legend*, (*4*) *Tyrolean* (*Schuplattler*), (*5*) *Andante Cantabile*, (*6*) *Perpetuum*, (*7*) *Elegy*, (*8*) *Valse*, (*9*) *Valse Macabre*, (*10*) *Orientale*, (*11*) *Saga* and (*12*) *Viennese* (*Wienerisch*). As might have been expected from a master of Godowsky's stamp, the pieces are all of exceptional artistic character although it is quite impossible to give an adequate description of their poetic design or of the glowing inventive originality with which they have been imbued by their author.

Fritz Kreisler has already added several of these remarkable solos to his own standing repertoire, and the careful editorial attention he has given to all the numbers enable an intimate insight into his own interpretation.

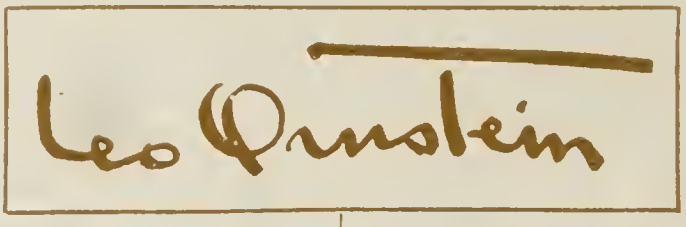
As may be imagined the numbers are possible only for advanced players. Godowsky's intricate polyphonic style of writing, his astonishing and prolific use of every harmonic and enharmonic device known to modern musical art and his brilliant inventive faculties have all been employed with bewildering freedom, yet with such certainty of design and effect as to produce a set of pieces, which is absolutely new and entirely original and which in point of daring and astonishing bravura has probably never before been equalled. These pieces will mark a very noticeable advance in the history of modern violin music.

* * *

Another important contributor to modern violin literature has been Max Vogrich, whose recent unexpected death, robbed the musical world of a creative musician of highest rank. Max Vogrich was internationally famous as a composer, editor, and arranger and had gained a world-wide reputation as a piano virtuoso through repeated concert-tours alone and in connection with August Wilhelmj. He was particularly expert in writing and arranging for the violin and some of his most inspired works were written for that instrument. Among these may be mentioned his so-called *Ballade de Villon* (ou sont les Neiges d'Anton?) and Three *Morceaux Caracteristiques d'Après Paganini* in which he has left us three concert arrangements of Paganini Caprices which only a master of his ability could have conceived and produced. These three Caprices have been issued under titles of (*1*) *Dans Les Bois* (Voice of the Woods), (*2*) *Danse des Ombres* (Dance of Shadows) and (*3*) *Chevalier Mousquetaire*, and form a valuable addition to this class of violin solo music. The Caprices in this version, with all the brilliancy, technical feats and scintillating character of the originals retained, have had their effectiveness considerably increased through the ingenious harmonic setting provided by Max Vogrich; and thanks to his masterly skill, they have been transformed into modern concert solos, fit for the repertoires of the most advanced disciples of the art of violin playing.

* * *

Quite recently, W. H. Rothwell, well-known as a conductor and writer of international reputation has composed a violin solo, *Viennese Greeting* (Wiener Gruss) which must not be overlooked in this list of modern violin publications. The solo is so charming in its melodic make-up, so modern in its harmonic setting, and so capably written for the solo instrument, that it must be considered as one of the most important *short solo numbers* contributed within recent years. It rivals much which Kreisler has produced in Viennese fashion, and has been played repeatedly by Albert Spalding with

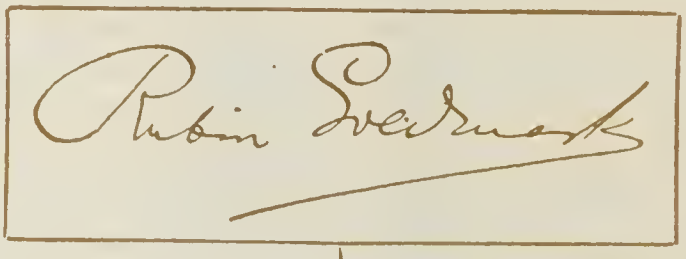


very decided and flattering success.

* * *

Leo Ornstein, one of the youngest of living solo pianists, but famous in both hemispheres for his fearless unheard-of propaganda of so-called "futurist-music" has perpetuated his musical beliefs and aims in a *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (Op. *31*) which seems to mark the utmost limits which ultra-modern composers of his stamp are endeavoring to reach. While Mr. Ornstein's piano works of this class have been heard repeatedly in public, thanks to his own mastery of the keyboard, this violin sonata is still awaiting public performance. But at any rate it is printed and remains a living monument to the ambitions of one of our most talked-of futurist composers, as well as to the unexampled skill and enterprise of the modern music engraver and publisher.

* * *



Exceptional interest attaches to a set of four original compositions for the violin by Rubin Goldmark, one of the foremost of living American composers. These compositions are descriptive in character and their melodic and harmonic scheme is in exact keeping with the teachings of our most advanced school of musical thought.

The underlying themes of these pieces are eloquently expressed in their titles which read (*1*) *The Call of the Plains*, (*2*) *Plaintive Air*, (*3*) *Witches' Sabbath* and (*4*) *Song of the Troubadour* and their specific melodious character as well as general interesting plan of development, entitles them to a very prominent place amongst the best of recent violin music.

This lengthy review of worth-while modern violin music, would be incomplete without the mention of three exceedingly fine original numbers by Louis Victor Saar, which are exquisite examples of modern violin writing. These numbers include the well-known *Chanson d'Amour* (Op. *60*, No. *2*), a breezy little *Gondoliera* (Boat Song, Op. *52*, No. *4*) and an exceptionally effective *Romance Melodique* (Op. *78*). And furthermore, some of his best contributions to the violin's literature are to be found in Saar's concert transcriptions of a *Menuet* and *Gigue* by Mozart as well as a *Caprice Humoresque*, *Caprice-Reverie* and *March-Caprice*, based on three of Rudolph Kreutzer's famous forty-two studies.

LOUIS VICTOR SAAR

* * *

In Conclusion

The production of such a large array of artistic modern works for the violin, as mentioned in the foregoing pages, should serve as a practical demonstration of the creative abilities of contemporary players, teachers and composers now in America. It should also prove that a vast amount of development is going on right now, and that if we will only look about and interest ourselves in the efforts, aims and ambitions of our living artists, we will be forced to admit that they are accomplishing a vast amount of serious, artistic work which is in every way as dignified, as thorough, and as worthy of success as anything produced by the writers of former generations.

In my own estimation, additional interest attaches to the compositions and arrangements I have mentioned owing to the fact that almost all have been conceived, written, performed and published in the United States, a splendid tribute, not only to the genius of the artists and enterprise of the publisher, but to the advanced state of violin culture prevalent at the present time in America.

The following pages comprise
. . a complete list of . .
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